

Horror: the lowest form of entertainment, art

Austin Gonzalez

OPINION EDITOR

When it comes to art there is no consensus on its lowest form. Some people are perturbed by the randomness of modern art, disgusted by the commission of advertisements, dismayed by the lack of technical skill of photography, and so on. I've found that the lowest art form is not necessarily something like film or literature, but the entire genre of horror. Absolutes are difficult to pin down and there are exceptional pieces, but horror remains the tag of the greatest collective garbage to pass off as art.

What is art? To define the lowest form of art would require such a starting point.

Art is simply an attempt to create emotion in the viewer. The definition is perhaps too wide ranging in some respects, but is easy enough to defend.

Plays, paintings, even food and advertisements elicit an emotional response to get a message across. Each has its own way of allowing us to cross that threshold from our world to theirs, to feel that something matters.

Of all the emotions artists take aim at, six are universal regardless of creed, race, sex, or religion: happiness, sadness, anger, disgust, surprise, and fear.

Although horror typically uses anger, disgust, sadness and surprise in conjunction with fear to scare you, fear is the uninspired foundation for poor works. With surprise,

at least the artist has to understand when the target audience reaches that level of comfortable complacency so that a shock can be truly effective. Fear can be induced by simply shutting off the lights.

Here is a picture; a young girl awakes alone in a dark windowless room. She fumbles to find the light switch, but there's no power. There is a hallway that extends seemingly forever with many doors on either side. As she walks, she hears what she cannot name: low grumbles, screeches, and a constant drip.

This most basic picture is repeated again and again with un inventive tweaks. It thrives on universal fears that include fear of abandonment, fear of the unknown, fear of failure, and fear of weakness. For example,

in the famous Slenderman video game, you're walking through the woods, it is dark, and your flashlight slowly dies. Paranormal Activity's scare tactics work because of the creepy unknown attacks in the dark.

Exceptions that can create an uncanny feeling beyond the basics are fantastic when you find them, but good luck finding them.

Horror as a genre is based on striking at basic fears. It's equivalent to 'psychics' who use cold readings with a large audience. If you can get just one person to scream, the rest of the audience is easy money.

Delving deeper into the human psyche to hit better emotional pay dirt is difficult, and horror is the cheap and easy route to get there.

Selective anonymity in the real world, online

Austin Gonzalez

OPINION EDITOR

The NSA, Google, Bitcoin, and Anonymous.

Aside from when we kill ourselves in large droves, the internet is the largest topic in the news today. The internet gives you more information than you could ever consume. The internet passes ideas (with or without consent from their originators) faster than the greatest trading routes of times past. Aside from its nonmaterial existence like the floating star child of 2001 and its amassment of information greater than that of the library of Alexandria, the thing that makes the internet

great is selective anonymity. One of the greatest fears people have is ads tracking them, websites watching them, people knowing them. You create your name, your image, and have a chance to change.

In the real world everything you say or do has some amount of permanence to it. It's not to say that the things we create will last forever, but at the very least some amount of time. The oldest structure is nearly 23 thousand years old. Written stories from the Greeks are now some of the most study pieces of literature. This is the problem. In reality, ideas are permanent.

"What happens on the internet stays on the internet." This asinine phrase is only

relevant if what you put on the internet is tied to you.

On the internet you are who you make yourself to be and the beauty of it is you can always make a new you. iluvpancak3s@gmail.com can become sam.rogers@searshc.com. If you make a wrong move you can rethink who you are and remake yourself. If in life you make a wrong step you have to "live with your mistakes." If you earnestly change, your opinions are more informed, better, protected against bias, and better reasoned you can delete your missteps and move forward. In life a reformed felon will always be just that in the eyes of society: a felon. This also forces you not to be more skeptical of the people you

meet of the internet but forces you to better understand they're arguments.

Ultimately what this means is that the internet is the single greatest bearer of progress. There are those that result at the idea of not knowing who people are or who they have been. There will be people who say that their mistakes make them who they are; this is true but your mistakes shouldn't hold you back. Your name is now a piece of capital. Nothing can be held against you, you are impermanence to be judged solely based on a single post then reformed.

You are nothing more than your thoughts and your reason. That's how things should be.

An international student's perspective on State of the Union 2014

Utsav Gandhi

CAMPUS EDITOR

I think the State of the Union should be made essential viewing—the actions of the world's most relevant economy have implications that are simply too wide-ranging.

Coming from countries where heads of state making annual reports or forecasts for public viewing may or may not be a practice, it is always an experience seeing all the media buildup to the speech, all the analytics used to predict the key topics and issues at hand, or even who the special guests of the First Lady are.

Unfortunately, on our campus we don't see as many politically active discussions when compared to other campuses, even though the current SGA President, over her time, has made a sincere effort to spark more civic engagement at IIT. It is worth noting though, that there definitely are students with strong public opinions, and it is always healthy

to initiate conversation and hear different viewpoints.

For the average international student, the State of the Union was more remarkable this year because of the imminent buzz surrounding foreign policy and immigration reform, as well as Obama's reinforcement of the traditional realization of the American dream—working hard and taking responsibility to get ahead.

He also announced the insourcing of jobs from abroad in the high-tech manufacturing/advanced technology industry and six additional research hubs across the country. His emphasis on the removal of costly, needless litigation should be a welcome move for entrepreneurs to set up more businesses, especially if they are immigrants and creating more jobs for Americans.

With the Michigan governor recently announcing that he is seeking visas to lure skilled immigrants to Detroit, international students who wish to stay in America after their

graduation should hope for a more positive scenario than was indicated by the recent outflux of students going back home for more lucrative jobs.

One wishes President Obama would have spent more time elaborating on the energy plans of the country, considering the stringent efforts made by some European countries and Japan, although a \$100 billion investment by businesses in new factories that use natural gas definitely has ramifications on both political and economic relations with countries around the world. He also emphasized high quality early education and redesigning technology in education, and one of the most welcome comments he made was in regards to the national loan debt.

With IIT's Up to Us team making its mark on the national level early in President Clinton's competition, it could not have been a more timely mention of the reforms Obama is trying to push for. The raise of the federal

minimum wage to \$10.10 and health insurance coverage reform were two of the more debate-inducing topics he gave considerable speech time to. Iran's nuclear program, intervention in Syria and the Arab Spring, pulling out of Afghanistan and a nod to nuclear disarmament were some of the foreign policy issues he mentioned. He may have focused on getting things done at home in his address, but he actually dedicated more time to foreign policy issues—at least 15 minutes of a speech that lasted a bit more than an hour—than to other hot topics like immigration, education, and health care.

So, putting aside the all-too-frequent standing ovations and Joe Biden's consistently animated face in the background, the State of the Union was as eloquent and captivating as it could be. "And next week," the President said, "the world will see one expression of that commitment when Team U.S.A. marches the red, white and blue into the Olympic stadium and brings home the gold!"

CAMPUS

IEEE @IIT holds first general body meeting of semester

Jai Sathyanarayanan

TECHNEWS WRITER

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Student Chapter at IIT had its first general body meeting for the spring semester on Wednesday, January 29 in the Siegel Hall Auditorium. Rohit Agarwal, Treasurer of IEEE @ IIT commenced the meeting by introducing the executive board members of IEEE to the students and the committees headed by them. He then spoke about the current projects funded by IEEE and the upcoming tours and events planned for the spring semester. Agarwal also mentioned the benefits of being an IEEE national member.

Eric Tendian, Webmaster of IEEE @ IIT unveiled the newly designed IEEE website. The URL of the website is ieee.iit.edu. It is a major improvement from our old website, and the Webmaster has put in commendable effort to make this possible. Our new website contains all the information about the activities and projects within IEEE @ IIT. Join committees and sign-up for tours using links available on the website.

The guest speaker for the session was Bruce Mueller, Director of Government & Public Safety Research, Motorola Solutions, Inc. who spoke about the vision of the company and its rich history. He showed us a glimpse of the revenue generated by the company in the previous year and the products currently under implementation.

The main focus of his discussion was on the improvement of safety, security and efficiency practices within industries, and the new frontiers in public safety for safer cities. He emphasized that a lot of companies nowadays actively collaborate with IEEE in mentoring professionals.

The current projects funded by IEEE are the Multi-touch Surface, Quadcopter, Guitar Amplifier, and Ardupilot. Students are encouraged to join projects they are interested in. More information related to these projects can be found on the website. IEEE @ IIT is organizing two tours in February. The earliest tour to S&C Electric Company is on Friday, February 7, and the next tour to Roberson and Associates has been scheduled to happen

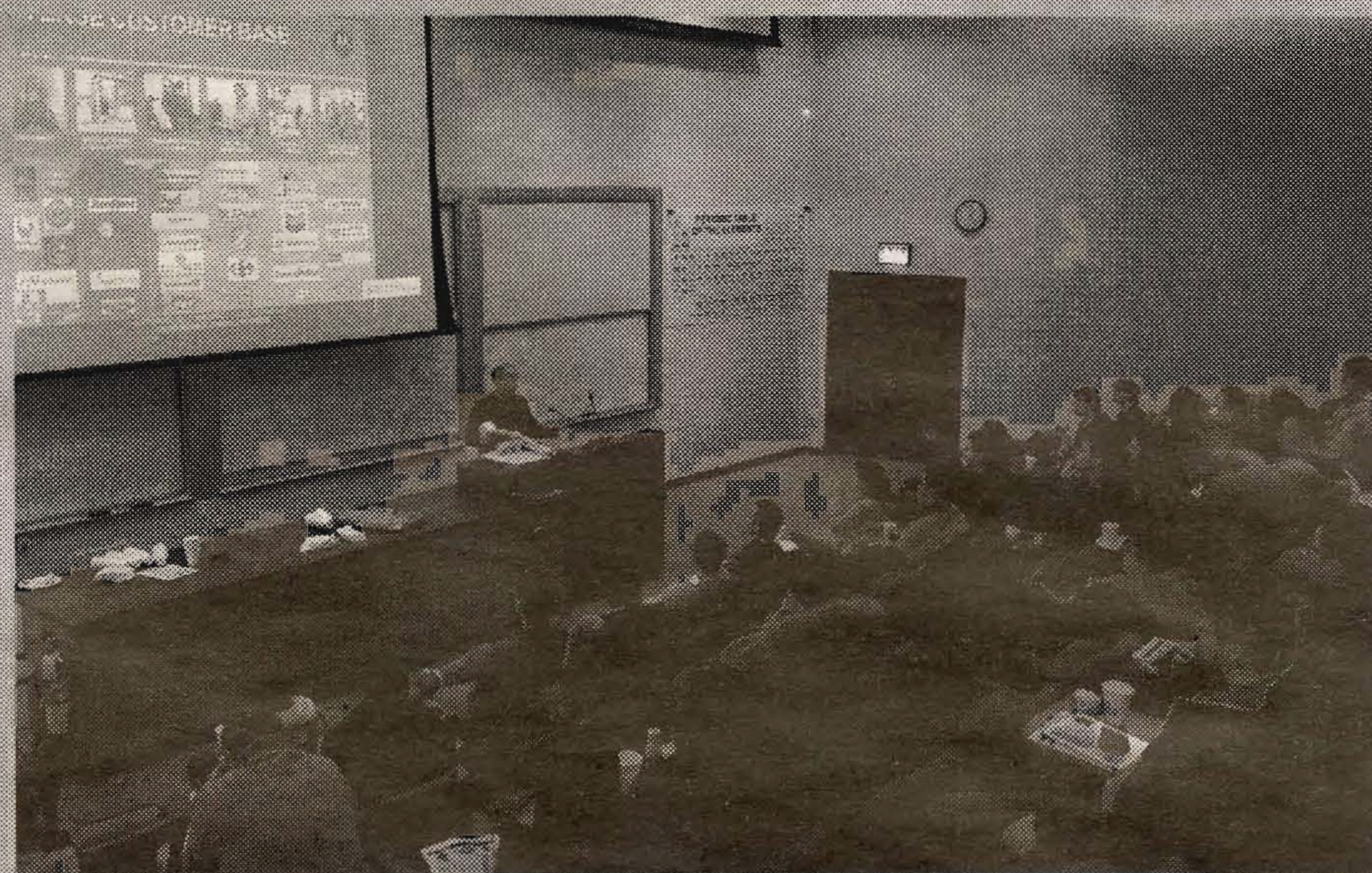


Photo by Jai Sathyanarayanan

on February 19. Students can sign-up for these tours through links on the website which will be made available soon.

The next general body meeting is

planned to be held on February 26, students will be notified about future meetings and events by email and the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/IEEEIIT/>.